

To this the British Foreign Minister replied saying:

This episode does not constitute an outbreak of war; it is merely a phase of a war which has been going on for some time and has not yet been terminated. I do not see how we can invoke the intervention of the League of Nations to check an offensive by the Poles in the course of their conflict with the Bolsheviks. We told them that his Majesty's Government could offer them no advice, and that they must choose peace or war on their own responsibility. Having left them free to choose, I hardly think that it is open to us to attempt to repress their action when they have made their choice. Such an attempt would certainly be regarded as intervention in favour of the Bolsheviks and against our allies, a result which it would be difficult to defend.

Even were such intervention desirable, it seems to me that the League of Nations (which cannot exercise its full powers until its Assembly has been convoked) would be in a very difficult position in any attempt to mediate between Poland and a Russian Government which does not recognize the League's authority.

In his second letter Lord Robert reminded Lord Curzon of the position of the League, and the guilt of the British Government in not invoking its provisions and powers in the matter. Lord Robert said:

I am sure you will agree with me that in the economic conditions of that part of the world, further fighting can only be regarded as a disaster. Unless the information which reaches me is entirely wrong, the whole of that part of Eastern Europe is a prey to disease, stravation, and misery which has rarely been equalled in the history of the world.

Critics of the League will not unreasonably say that if it could not intervene to prevent an evil of these dimensions, of the occurrence of which it had full warning, its usefulness in the future is not likely to be great; and the growth of such an opinion would bring many of us into despair, and I venture to hope that even now something may be done to retrieve the position. If the Government feel that they are precluded from asking for intervention immediately, surely at the very least telegraphic instructions might be sent to our representative on the Council of the League now sitting that he should bring the whole matter before the Council, and should urge that every preparation should be made to take action as soon as a reasonable chance offers.

The responsibility of the British Government is measured by its power in the councils of the nations; and if by our action or neglect further catastrophes take place in Eastern Europe, and the only future safeguard for peace is discredited, the chief share of the guilt will rest upon ourselves.

Exactly. And thus another of the chief actors in what was supposed to be a drama suddenly realizes in the midst of the play that he is taking part in a farce. Poor Lord Robert! he at any rate was sincere about the League. He imagined he saw in it a basis for a league of all nations that would put an end to secret diplomacy and territorial aggrandizement. His friend Lord Curzon has happily relieved him of many vain imaginings.

But Lord Robert's enlightenment did not stop there. On 11 May he had learned from Lord Curzon that "until quite recently there has been no evidence to show that the Poles have been contemplating an offensive against Russia," but one week later, Mr. Bonar Law speaking for the Government of which Lord Curzon is a leading member, said:

In October of last year when it was feared that Russian border states would be attacked by the Soviet Government, a request was addressed by the Poles for assistance in military equipment. In consequence of our commitments elsewhere the British Government were unable to give any financial assistance, but offered to supply a certain quantity of surplus stores on condition that the cost of moving them, as well as the arrangements for transport, should be undertaken by the Polish Government. . . . As a matter of fact a bargain was made and the material was actually given to the Polish Government, and to have gone back on that would have been to break the bond.

This may have been startling news to Lord Curzon, although it seems likely that he must somehow have heard of it before, as the law of Downing Street is that strategy should go hand in hand with diplomacy.

When a government can take action in a matter of this kind without knowledge or consent of the taxpayer whose money has been spent on the munitions thus freely given away; when the British monarch can be so ill-advised by his counsellors as to send encouraging telegrams to a factional leader like General Pilsudski, congratulating him on his recent military successes; then no one can be surprised at the discredit and contumely which has fallen upon European Governments. It is said that the patience of the English people has cracked at last, and that there is realization of the profound truth that officeholders of whatever stripe are not to be trusted. The Polish business is too much for even the stomach of respectability. The *Manchester Guardian* in dealing with the question recently, says:

Its more likely result is a steady decline in regard for all the English institutions felt to be implicated in the general discredit. One traces this already in the growth of the type of Socialism which dismisses ordinary political action and Parliamentary institutions as tainted. The culmination of such a process of decay is described by Carlyle at the beginning of his "French Revolution" in the famous picture of a nature which has rightly lost faith in everything and everyone set over it. That is the general trend of the ordinary citizen's thinking in post-war England, and the almost epigrammatic completeness of the betrayal of the England of 1914 in the Polish policy of the British Government in 1920 is the kind of food on which such scepticism thrives.

And all this time Mr. Wilson seems to be labouring under the quaint impression that some members of our Congress have been actuated by a sinister desire to destroy the covenant of the League of Nations; as a matter of plain fact, by their support of the Polish drive and the providing of munitions and military advisors for that mad adventure, both Britain and France have done far more toward destroying all faith in the League of Nations than any action taken by members of the United States Congress. Mr. Wilson has been very free in criticizing the action of certain Senators; will he not now send one of his pungent notes to the British and French Governments, or is he satisfied to leave things as they are, never dreaming that his acquiescence may and should promote in America the same lack of faith in, and contempt for, our political institutions?

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

OUR correspondent "Gallerius," whose letter appears in this issue, perhaps uses the word radical in a Palmerian sense; in which case there is nothing to be said. No one can quite make out what the Palmerian radical is, hence no one can say what he is bent on or with what programme or philosophy he is equipped. But if our correspondent takes his definition from the dictionary, his letter seems based on a misapprehension. The radical is not interested in destructive criticism or destructive methods, let alone regarding them as "a gay business," but in the promotion of disinterested thought. The ablest and most distinguished of American radicals said:

Social reform is not to be secured by noise and shouting, by complaints and denunciations, by the formation of parties, or the making of revolutions, but by the awakening of thought and the progress of ideas. Until there be correct thought, there can not be right action; and when there is correct thought, right action will follow. Power is in the hands of the masses of men. What oppresses the masses is their ignorance, their short-sighted selfishness.

"There rests upon the radical," proceeds our correspondent, "the obligation to develop in theory a new economics and a new political economy . . . which will bear the test of the severest criticism." But all this has been done. It was begun a century and a half ago by Turgot and his associates, and its development has been carried forward by a line of economists of, to say the least, quite respectable reputation. This new economics contemplates precisely the thing that seems to engage the interest of our correspondent; namely, a society entirely free from class-domination and class-exploitation, a society which assures absolute freedom of production and freedom of exchange. Its "technique of organization" has been set forth in France by Quesnay, in England by Adam Smith and Richard Cobden, in this country by Henry George, in Austria by Ludwig Gumplowicz and Theodor Hertzka, and in Germany by writers innumerable. Whatever else our correspondent may complain of, he should at least not complain of any failure in "a detailed plan of reconstruction which meets every test of reason." He might perhaps best see what sort of thing the radical has to offer in this line, by beginning with the last chapter, which is all he need ever read, of Marx's "Kapital"; then reading carefully the "Grossgrundeigentum und Soziale Frage" of Franz Oppenheimer, the same author's "Theorie der Reinen und Politischen Ökonomie," and then the "Protection or Free Trade" of Henry George. This lay-out of provender will give him most plentifully what he says he wants, "something solid for both the friends and the enemies of the new regime to set their teeth in." It is something indeed so solid that those who hitherto have undertaken to bite it have simply broken their teeth. Henry George, in a preface to the fourth edition of "Progress and Poverty," a book which sets forth the same "detailed plan of reconstruction which meets every test of reason," says what could be said of very few books, "I have yet to see an objection not answered in advance in the book itself."

Perhaps our correspondent, at the end of this exercise, will see that radicals have been quite forward to "accept the obligations of careful, methodical and constructive thought." They have assumed no monopoly of those obligations or of the ability to discharge them; they desire the production and exchange of thought to be quite as free as the production and exchange of goods. But they have done well enough, possibly, not quite to deserve the implication that they habitually shirk those obligations. It seems unfortunate, perhaps a little unfair, that our correspondent should disparage the "apostles of the new order," without knowing at least a little of the best that those apostles can do. He would, for example, find a great deal of careful, methodical and constructive thought applied to the most modern conditions and our very latest problems, in the solid treatise called "Democracy versus Socialism," by the Australian economist, Max Hirsch; and if he can summon energy to chew his way through seven chapters of the most highly concentrated and most highly nutritious pemmican ever put before mankind, he will find it in Franz Oppenheimer's little volume, hardly more than a pamphlet, called "Der Staat." It is solid food-value, if one can worry it down, but it is very, very rough.

May not our correspondent's suspicion of radicalism—we put this forward quite tentatively—be due to two things? May it not be due in part to the distrust of simplicity which is consequent upon sophistication by the apparent complexity of human society? The law of the economic fundamental, as he will dis-

cover from a perusal of the literature here cited, is extremely simple, as simple as Newton's formula. The process of establishing the economic fundamental is also extremely simple. Therefore one may easily doubt whether anything so simple can possibly reach as far and accomplish as much as "the apostles of the new order" think it may. It looks too much like a nostrum or a panacea to recommend itself to the sophisticated and more or less bewildered sense of the observer of affairs. One can be a little encouraged, however, by remembering that all the fundamentals of nature are quite simple; Newton's formula is a happy parallel. This encouragement may induce our correspondent to fall back on his own prescription of careful and methodical thought. If he will go through some such course of reading as we have suggested, grasp the economic fundamental, and then stringently think through to the end of its implications in any set of economic circumstances he chooses to postulate, he will then know for himself, which is the most satisfactory kind of knowledge, how far those implications may be expected to extend.

May not our correspondent be influenced also by the radical's attitude towards the "myriad of practical problems" intimated in the last paragraph of his letter? Perhaps this attitude may not seem to him devout enough towards "the functions of the technician in industry," towards industrial democratization, the Plumb plan, the shop-stewards' movement, or what not. The radical, however, does not disparage these matters; he is merely aware that until the economic fundamental is established, none of them can be adjusted with any permanence, and that once the economic fundamental be established, most of them will adjust themselves. Here is another opportunity for careful and methodical thought. Let our correspondent follow through the implications of the economic fundamental upon every one of his "myriad of practical problems" and see how many of those problems will disappear bodily, and how many will be simplified almost to the point of automatic adjustment. The radical's governing maxim is, "First things first"; or, as it might be put, "In digging a well, begin at the top and not at the bottom—it is easier work and less than half as much of it." The radical, however, has a very keen interest in all organized dealings with the "myriad of practical problems," because he is aware that all such dealings are educative. Trade-unionism, for example, as an end in itself, does not interest the radical; but as a way to the establishment of the co-operative principle, he has great interest in it. Nationalization of coal-mines, again, is nothing to stir the radical very deeply; as bringing men into a much clearer view of the economic fundamental, however, it has value which he recognizes and fully appreciates.

We hope our correspondent will not complain because, instead of arguing his letter, we have tried merely to put him in the way of satisfying his own doubts; instead of taking up cudgels for the radical cause, we have tried only to indicate how he might most fairly and competently assess that cause for himself. We would not do him the injustice of assuming that he wishes us to engage in dialectics or to do his thinking for him. Doing any one's thinking is no part of this paper's business; to attempt it is an immense and silly pretension. We are glad of the privilege, however, of encouraging independent thought along what seems to us a profitable and infrequently chosen line, and of pointing out such way-marks as are known to us.